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## Lazer Land Outing with Boys

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# Lazer Land Outing with Boys

## **Abstract**

I'm not their mother, although the picture  
so convinces the arcade manager  
that he shouts, Happy Mother's Day...

## **Disciplines**

Poetry

## **Comments**

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Debra Marquart

## LAZER LAND OUTING WITH BOYS

I'm not their mother, although the picture  
so convinces the arcade manager  
that he shouts, *Happy Mother's Day*,

the moment we storm the entrance,  
escaping the rain, these two blond boys,  
their dark-haired father, and me,

the female free radical attached to  
this all-male atom. Quirks of custody  
result in the boys spending Mother's Day

with their father, and Father's Day  
with their mother, who is presently  
in Chicago having lunch or skiing

in the Sierra Nevadas or possibly  
snorkeling off the coast of Bermuda.  
Pot roasts are simmering somewhere

but not in our kitchens. *Decided to  
take Mom out on her special day?*  
The arcade manager persists.

I should correct him. Truth is,  
the weather's been bad, television  
worse, church out of the question,

and short of killing each other  
we've elected this morning to hurl  
basketballs through electronic hoops,

grip the careening wheels of race cars,  
our feet heavy on the accelerators  
as we pass through movie landscapes



where we can lose the road, spin out,  
roll over and walk away unscathed.  
Now, time for the heavy artillery—

flak jackets with velcro straps, combat  
helmets, power packs, and lazer pistols  
with hair-sensitive triggers in our palms.

*Do we want teams, the attendant  
asks, or every man for himself?*  
We look at the boys—teams, they nod,

the big people against the little.  
He powers up the computer,  
a small whine rising from its belly

spreads through our power packs  
and pistols, our chests and torsos  
light up in fluorescent patches—

the targets worth hitting, the tender  
spots only those we love can see.  
*Be good to her now, the attendant says,*

still misunderstanding. We enter  
the dark cave of the shooting gallery,  
where we will lay in wait behind barriers,

roll, tumble, and dodge, where we will  
lurk on one knee and search the dark,  
then take aim, as only family can.